

NEWS RELEASE

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Three Indicted for Producing Child Pornography

Peoria, Illinois -- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that two of three defendants indicted for producing child pornography made their initial appearance in federal court this afternoon, February 17, 2006. Tyrone Lenard Williams, 33, of 705 E. Douglas, Bloomington, Illinois and Sarah Leeann Smith, 20, of 1620 Great Oak Road, Peoria, were arrested yesterday. The initial appearance for the third defendant, Robert Lee Williams, 23, currently incarcerated at the Illinois Department of Corrections, is scheduled for March 16, 2006.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John A. Gorman ordered Tyrone Williams and Smith be detained pending a hearing scheduled for February 27, 2006. Trial was scheduled for both on April 17, 2006, before U.S. District Judge Joe Billy McDade.

The indictment alleges that from December 2004 through December 2005, the three, who were personal acquaintances, produced child pornography at Tyrone Williams' residence where he maintained digital camera equipment and a computer with an Internet link. Tyrone Williams allegedly provided alcohol and marijuana to teenage boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 15 to persuade the teens to enter and remain at his residence. Tyrone Williams and Smith allegedly persuaded the teens to engage in sexually explicit conduct with each other as well as with the defendants so that photographs of such conduct could be taken of the minors.

Defendant Tyrone Williams faces one additional count of distribution of child pornography via computer on February 8, 2006.

(More)

If convicted, the offense of production of child pornography carries a mandatory minimum of 15 years to 30 years in prison; distribution of child pornography carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years to 20 years imprisonment.

The charges are the result of an investigation by the Central Illinois Cybercrime Unit (CICU) which includes representatives of the Bloomington Police Department, Peoria Police Department,. U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Tazewell County State's Attorney's Office; and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas A. Keith.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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